

December 14, 1962

Dr. G. B. Chisholm  
Seawood R.R. 2  
Victoria, B.C., Canada

Dear Dr. Chisholm:

I am sorry now not to have paid much closer attention to your paper at Ciba; I find half-remembered phrases coming to mind again and again. Perhaps you even solved my dilemma: how the humanist could define humanity. (I would certainly not do it in genetic terms; communication may be a better clue, and if we should find it difficult in future to discriminate against dolphins, some machines, or extra-terrestrial intelligence, this is surely sounder than a self-serving anthropocentrism.)

At any rate, may I ask you to humor my impatience and send me a copy of your draft (which I will happily return if this suits your convenience).

With best wishes,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

Bcc: Dr. F.H.C. Crick

P.S. Francis - Do we need a lie? If nothing else, the need to communicate would motivate the social contract, which does not seem to me so unreasonable a basis for ethics. Among other things it helps establish the rights of personality. The cultivation of humane feelings would be almost indispensable to make the system work at all. Or am I falling into the sentimental traps I warned our friends against?

Chisholm